

## Summary and Key Points

### The Green Consumer – Choices for the Entire Family

#### Chapter 2 Personal care products

##### Summary:

- The personal care products we use everyday, such as shampoo, body soap, hand soap, toothpaste and deodorants, are all available in natural forms.
- Look for products that use recycled packaging and are not over-packaged.
- Focus on the ingredient list of the product that you are purchasing.
- Look for products that are certified organic and organically grown and processed.
- Whenever possible, select personal care products that are fair trade and preferably made in smaller quantities by a local manufacturer.
- Personal care products affect both the environment and personal health. Our skin absorbs all the products that we use.
- Personal care products often contain numerous chemicals.
- Many antiperspirants block pores and inhibit the natural functioning of your body. Look for products that not only inhibit odour, but also allow your body to breathe naturally.
- Ensure that the products you buy are organic and certified.
- Women should be wary of over-packaged commercial make-up products that contain chemicals, many of which inhibit natural body functions. Instead, choose natural products, which are safer and more environmentally friendly.
- Natural makeup uses ingredients such as cocoa butter, aloe and baking soda. It is free of chemicals and synthetic fragrances.
- Natural makeup products work as effectively as their chemical counterparts.
- Whenever possible, choose locally made, handcrafted, organic and fair-trade ingredients.
- Make the switch to natural care products with the products you use every day. Shampoos and soaps are a good place to start.
- Choose natural products with essential oils rather than synthetic fragrances.
- Natural care products require no extra effort to use and are better for both you and the environment.

### **Chapter 3 - Cleaning Products**

#### **Summary:**

- The average consumer uses about 40 pounds of toxic cleaners per year.
- Over half of the victims of accidental poisonings attributable to cleaning products are children younger than 6 years old.
- Natural cleaning products look the same as conventional cleaners, but are a safer alternative.
- Unless a cleaning product lists the ingredients on the label, you have no idea what it contains. Check the label and the list of ingredients carefully before purchasing a product.
- Most companies include a 1-800 number on the label. Contact the company directly if you have any questions or concerns about a product.
- The most toxic commercial cleaning products are oven cleaners, drain cleaners and toilet bowl cleaners. Switch to natural alternatives to avoid coming into direct contact with these caustic substances.
- There are effective, completely natural alternatives to commercial dish liquids, all purpose cleaners and floor and glass cleaners.
- Make your own products using basic ingredients such as baking soda, borax, vinegar and pure soap. Making products yourself allows you to know exactly what you are using and to avoid toxic ingredients.
- A list of ingredients you recognize and understand will generally indicate a product is truly natural.
- Choose clothing that doesn't require dry cleaning. Look for eco-cleaning services in your neighbourhood that don't use the toxic chemical percoethylene. Wet cleaning is another chemical-free alternative offered by some dry-cleaners.
- Request your dry cleaning be returned without the wasteful plastic wrapping. If using conventional dry cleaning, hang clothing outside for a few hours to rid it of chemical residue.
- Dry cleaning may be harsh on clothing.

### **Chapter 4 - Baby Products**

#### **Summary:**

- Children are affected by everyday products in your home that may pose a health risk, including toys, synthetic carpeting and both polyester and non-organic clothing. Both chemicals and air and water quality in products can affect your family's health as well as the environment.
- Traditional disposable diapers make up 2% of all garbage thrown out daily. We want to reduce this.
- Consider reusable cloth diapers or chlorine-free diapers. There is a big health advantage for your baby in reducing chlorine in the environment and minimizing direct skin contact with chlorine.

- Try to feed your children organic foods and introduce natural products as early on as possible.
- Breast feeding is the #1 choice for infants.
- Make your own baby food, puree it and freeze it in ice cube trays. This way you will know exactly what your baby is eating.
- Clothing for children should be durable and chemical-free. Natural clothing is a safe way to dress your child. Consider consignment stores and hand-me-downs for growing children.
- Look for safe, non-toxic toys made of natural rubber or organic cotton. Toys made from natural wood or bamboo are other safe alternatives.
- Crib frames should be made from wood or bamboo products and treated with a safe non-toxic substance. Organic mattresses should be made of natural rubber and bedding should be made with organic cotton.
- Say no to synthetic carpets and rugs and yes to hardwood flooring. Consider an air filtration unit for your child's bedroom to ensure good air quality.

## **Chapter 5 Organic Food**

### **Summary:**

- Food is one of the fastest growing areas of organic products.
- People are thinking critically about how food is made and about the quality of the food they eat. The choices we make in food items affect the planet.
- Consider choosing more fresh produce and vegetables. Buy locally and support organic.
- Choose fewer over-packaged and processed foods.
- Support local farmers. You will have a better idea of where your food is coming from, and it will be fresher because it won't have been shipped from thousands of miles away.
- 1. Look for products that are locally grown and organically grown. Buy organic and support organic farmers. 2. Buy local. 3. Choose imported conventional food as a last choice.
- Establish a relationship with your local farmer and patronize farmers' markets whenever possible. It's a great way to get fresh organic produce.
- Incorporate reusable cloth napkins into your kitchen. Portable bamboo utensils are also a good idea.
- Purchase energy efficient appliances.
- The three most important things to remember are: buy organic, support local farmers and avoid over-packaged and processed foods.

## **Chapter 6 Energy**

### **Summary:**

- Energy conservation has many environmental and economic advantages.
- A great way to begin using energy more efficiently is with compact florescent light bulbs. They use one quarter of the energy of an incandescent bulb and last about ten times longer.
- Programmable thermostats allow you to reduce energy consumption while you are out.
- Use low-flow showerheads and aerators on faucets to reduce water consumption.
- Reduce water consumption and save money by turning off the tap while brushing your teeth, installing low-flow toilets and putting timers on garden hoses.
- Turn off all lights and computers when not in use. Install ceiling fans to reduce reliance on air conditioning. Open curtains during the day to allow heat in and close them at night to keep it in.
- Consider draft proofing, caulking and adding extra insulation for maximum energy efficiency.
- Always choose the most efficient appliance available.
- Hemp shower curtains are more durable and will last longer than PVC shower curtains, which tend to rip easily and end up in a landfill.
- Reduce your ecological footprint by carefully planning your route to work. Look for alternatives to driving, such as public transit, biking, or walking. Cycling and walking are good for your health, as well as the planet's.
- Be as organized and efficient as possible to reduce the number of car trips you make. By doing so you will also reduce the amount of emissions in the air.

## **Chapter 7 Packaging and Labelling**

### **Summary:**

- Packaging and labelling are extremely important because they describe the product and specify what it contains.
- Certifiable bodies deem a product to be green.
- There are over 160 different countries that have their own methods of certifying products.
- Look for products that are labelled biodegradable and are backed-up with legitimate certification.
- Products that are labelled chemical-free should include an ingredient list on the packaging.
- Look for products that are labelled as certified organic.
- Green products are now available at many retailers, including conventional stores as well as specialty and health food stores.

- Use ingredient lists to help you choose natural items made of ingredients you understand, such as water, baking soda or pure liquid soap.
- For better waste management, choose products with less packaging that generate less waste.
- Buy in bulk using refillable containers to reduce waste.

## **Chapter 8 Buying for Value**

### ***Clothing***

- Eco-fashion is popular. Look for
- Eco-fashion is popular. Look for organic clothing in large retail stores and for designers who integrate environmental fabrics into their lines. Popular organic fabrics include cotton, hemp, bamboo and soy.
- Organic cotton is grown and processed without chemicals and is one of the purest products you can buy.
- Conventional cottons are grown and processed using pesticides and chemicals that filtrate into our skin, our soil and our water system. Support cotton farmers and manufacturers who use ecologically responsible practices.
- Many people with allergies can't wear conventional clothing. Organic clothing, which has not been dyed or processed with chemicals, provides a safe option.
- Organic clothing is ethical: manufacturers follow sweatshop-free and fair-trade practices.
- Natural garments look the same as conventional garments. They offer better value because the fibres are stronger, more durable and long lasting.
- Encourage local retailers to carry a wider range of environmentally friendly products made from organic and recycled materials.

### ***Products for the Home***

- Buy products that have great value. Price is not an indicator of value. Instead, look for environmentally friendly products that are comfortable, made with quality ingredients and that will last a long time.
- Choose couches with organic fabric or fill. Choose hardwood for coffee tables.
- Home furnishings are a significant factor in poor indoor air quality. Choose items that are natural and as chemical-free as possible.
- Choose a natural carpet such as wool or jute rather than synthetic carpeting which retains toxins, dust, moisture, and pet dander.
- Consider hardwood, cork or bamboo as flooring options.
- Choose reused or vintage furnishings over new ones. They offer great quality, stand the test of time and are going to last a lot longer.
- Long-lasting, durable pieces constitute great value.
- Consider natural rubber mattresses, built without chemicals or synthetic materials, for the bedroom
- Consider organic bedding options for a healthy night's sleep.

### *Home Office*

- Home office supplies and furniture can easily be “greened up.”
- Don’t print every e-mail you receive. Use 100% post-consumer recycled products for your home office and use both sides of the paper when printing.
- Use a blue box to recycle your office paper, or shred and reuse as packaging fill.
- Buy biodegradable and refillable pens.
- Choose the most energy efficient computer available and check to ensure it is Energy-Star rated. Flat screen monitors are the most energy efficient.
- Donate old computers to a local non-profit business or to a business that refurbishes computers.
- Look for resale or vintage items, rather than new office furniture.
- Shopping online is a growing trend and an environmentally friendly option. You can further reduce car trips by having products delivered by a courier.
- Remember to reuse furniture, buy energy-efficient hardware and computers, and incorporate recycled office supplies into your home office.

### **Chapter 09A Reducing Products**

#### **Summary:**

- Reducing is the most important of the three R’s.
- We have to reduce our consumption as well as the number of products we purchase.
- We need to find ways to reduce our ecological footprint, from the amount of packaging we purchase to the amount of chemicals we put into our environment.
- Distinguish between needs and wants in your every-day purchasing decisions. Reduce your extraneous purchases and buy only those things you will use on an every-day basis.
- Start eliminating the amount of packaging you bring into your home.
- Buy in bulk. It’s cheaper than buying pre-packaged goods.
- Buying in bulk lets you buy only as much as you need.
- Don’t buy individually wrapped products.
- When shopping in bulk, bring recyclable containers.
- Examine the packaging on the products you use and start eliminating waste wherever possible.

## **Chapter 09B Reusing Products**

### **Summary:**

- Switch from cardboard and plastic drink containers to bottles and reusable mugs.
- Bring your own disposable cutlery to restaurants to reduce the amount of plastic being thrown out.
- Use refillable rather than plastic bottles. Take them to work.
- Plastic shopping bags end up in the waste stream. Use reusable cloth bags instead.
- Use recyclable cloth lunch bags, Tupperware and refillable bottles for a “litterless lunch”. Choose fruit that comes in its own packaging, such as bananas and oranges, which are completely biodegradable and compostable.
- Use products such as hemp tea bags and cloth coffee filters that can be reused over and over again.
- Repair, refurbish or donate your old computer instead of throwing it away.
- Give items you no longer use a ‘second life’: donate them, pass them on to future generations or share them with neighbours.
- Keep products out of landfills by reusing them.

## **Chapter 09C Recycling**

### **Summary:**

- Many municipalities have adopted recycling programs.
- If there are material your municipality doesn’t accept for recycling, consider lobbying your local politicians or city councillor to broaden the range of acceptable blue box items.
- Phones and inkjet printers are two of the many products that can be recycled.
- Office paper should be recyclable.
- Batteries should be safely disposed of at your local household hazardous waste site.
- Consider using rechargeable batteries. They are an efficient way to reduce the number of batteries entering the waste stream.
- Check to see if your municipality has a household hazardous waste site. Dispose of all cleaning products, paints, medicines and chemical-based products by taking them to this site.
- Look for products made from recycled materials provided in recyclable containers.

## **Chapter 10 – Giving Sustainably**

### **Summary:**

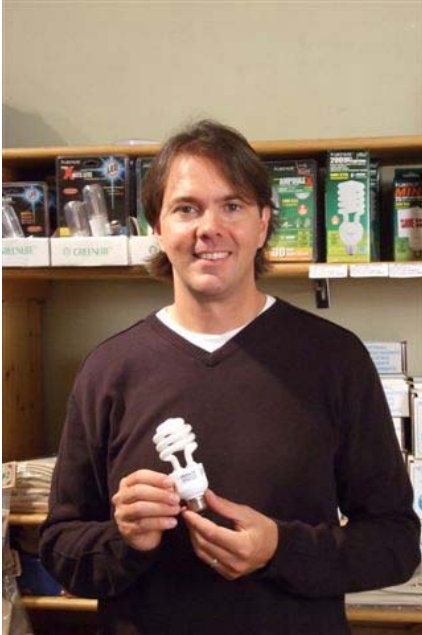
- Giving sustainably is an ecological way of gift giving. Consider home-made gifts, reused items or creative alternatives to traditional gifts.
- Tickets to the theatre or a sports event are great gift ideas.
- Create neighbourhood exchange, such as a tool exchange. Lend items such as hedge clippers or mowers to eliminate consumption and reduce waste.
- Look for gifts that require no electricity. A set of headphones with a solar panel recharges and plays off the power of the sun. Attaching a solar-powered bag to your bicycle is a sustainable way to recharge laptop computers, music players or cell phones.
- Be environmentally responsible by using recycled paper, hemp paper, cotton bags and recycled newspapers, magazines, comics and maps for creative gift wrapping.
- There are many alternatives for sustainable gift giving.

## **Chapter 11 Teaching our Children**

### **Summary:**

- There are many ways to encourage environmental sensitivity in our children.
- Turn off the television and take your children outdoors. Spend time with them appreciating nature.
- Involve your children in environmental practices around the house. Talk about environmental issues.
- Take your children shopping with you and teach them to think critically about labelling, advertising and marketing.
- Distinguish between true needs and wants, and discourage the culture of want.
- Teach your children by example: read and talk with them about environmental issues and engage them in environmentally responsible practices.

## About Rob Grand



Rob Grand is the owner of Grassroots Environmental Products, Canada's largest green lifestyle retailer. Prior to opening Grassroots in 1994, Rob spent many years working with non-profit environmental organizations in various capacities as an educator, spokesperson, organizer, project manager, and media liaison.

During this time, Rob recognized a lack of alternative, earth-friendly products in the marketplace. Determined to effect change, Rob had all the motivation he needed to create Grassroots- a business that would offer consumers low-impact choices for a healthy, sustainable future while providing him with a platform to continue his passionate work for the environment.

In his 18 years of environmental work, Rob has become a leading advocate, spokesperson, and educator on green lifestyle products and issues. He has served as a director of several non-profit environmental organizations, such as the Toronto Environmental Alliance, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Earthroots Foundation, Friends of the Don East, and the Toronto Recycling Action Committee. He currently volunteers as a director with the Coalition for a Green Economy, Green Enterprise Toronto, and the Local Flavour Plus Foundation. Rob has also been a guest lecturer at a number of grade schools, colleges and universities.

As a spokesperson for green products and environmental issues, Rob has appeared in every major radio, print and television media outlet in Toronto.

## Resources:

[www.grassrootsstore.com](http://www.grassrootsstore.com)

Grassroots Environmental Products was built on the foundation of environmental education and stewardship. Since the doors opened in 1994, Grassroots has grown to become Canada's largest source of environmentally friendly products and services. Grassroots operated two retail stores, an e-commerce website, a commercial sales division, and a wholesale department.

Grassroots was established to help provide people with the products and information they need to lead a healthy, earth-friendly lifestyle. The company is an active promoter of the green lifestyle, stocking a broad range of products such as biodegradable household cleaning products, non-toxic personal care items, recycled office supplies, and organically grown cotton and hemp clothing. The stores also focus on solar powered products, air and water filtration, organic cotton bedding and towels, as well as a great selection of environmental books and magazines, and household items.

As awareness of environmental and health issues increases, Grassroots maintains its position as an industry leader for products and information. Grassroots employees feel that an "educated consumer is a green consumer"; therefore both stores are rich in information about the current environmental issues and health topics. Many of the staff at Grassroots are active in local and national environmental organizations which allow them to bring first-hand, current information to their customers. Similarly, the product lines at Grassroots are continuously evolving as the demand for environmentally responsible products increases.

With the launch of its e-commerce website in 2005, GrassrootsStore.com has overshot all expectations, serving Canadian and American markets in equal measure. Over the years, Grassroots has been recognized with numerous green awards as an eco-shop that truly walks the talk. To learn more about the many green activities, events and initiatives that Grassroots is involved in, visit the About Us section of their website.

**For more information on living a green lifestyle check these websites:**

[www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)

[www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org) - The David Suzuki foundation works through science and education to protect the diversity of nature and our quality of life.

[www.treehugger.org](http://www.treehugger.org) - Treehugger is the leading media outlet dedicated to driving sustainability mainstream. Blogs, daily newsletters, video segments and radio shows can be found at this site.

[www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com) -The Organic Trade Association is the leading business association representing the organic industry in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Its more than 1200 members include growers, processors, shippers, retailers, certification organizations and other involved in the business of producing and selling certified organic products. Check your local, provincial, state and federal municipalities.

Check your local library or bookstore for green sections and great books on the environment. Here are some suggested readings:

Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to a Non-Toxic and Environmentally safe Housekeeping, By Annie Berthold-Bond, Ceres Press 1994

Ecoholic: Your Guide to the Most Environmentally Friendly Information, Products and Services in Canada, By Adria Vasil, Vintage Canada 2007.

Radical Simplicity: Small Footprints on a Finite Earth, by Jim Merkel, New Society Publishers, 2003.



**About Shannon Leroux:**

[www.shannonleroux.com](http://www.shannonleroux.com)

Shannon is a talented actress who has been featured on CTV & Global Television, the History Channel and a variety of independent films. She has performed in theatre, industrial videos, and contributed to many commercials and voiceovers. She is represented by her agent, Colin McMurray who can be reached at [ColinMcMurray@rogers.com](mailto:ColinMcMurray@rogers.com).

Along with her many acting credits, Shannon enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Defense unit of the Canadian Forces and attained the qualification of Firearms Certified marksman status. She is also a group 2 fitness instructor and competitive swimmer and has attained titles as both a Pro Figure Athlete and Pro Fitness Model with the WNSO Fame Organization.

Special thanks to the Leroux family for their participation in this video series.

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